

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-27 are now present in this application. Claim 1 is independent. Claims 1-18 and 20-27 have been amended. Claims 9, 18 and 27 are currently withdrawn. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statements filed January 30, 2006; December 27, 2007; February 20, 2008 and November 24, 2008, and for providing Applicants with initialed copies of the PTO-SB08 forms filed therewith.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, 13-17, 19 and 22-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 5,581,083 (Majumdar). Further, claims 2-3, 11-12, 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Majumdar in view of US 5,923,178 (Higgins). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a contact pin including a first conductive layer composed of a first conductive material and a second conductive layer composed of a second conductive material with a lower hardness than the first conductive material. The first conductive layer is formed at the outside from the second conductive layer.

Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Majumdar.

Claim 1 now recites that the first conductive layer is formed at the outside from the second conductive layer, a limitation originally in claim 5, in addition to the second conductive layer composed of a second conductive material with a lower hardness than the first conductive material. This relationship is best seen in Figure 7, where the first layer 51b, having a greater hardness, surrounds the second layer 51c. The harder first layer suppresses the deformation of the second conductive layer at the time of contact of the pin and terminal device. In contrast, Majumdar discloses a first conductive layer 16 having a higher hardness on the beam 12 and surrounded by the second conductive layer 18. The second conductive layer deforms at the time of contact and the shape of the pin is not maintained.

In addition, dependent claims 4, 13 and 22 recite a base material in addition to the two conductive layers. The base material is best seen in the cross sectional view of Figure 8. The first and second conductive layers are exposed at the front end of the contact pin but the base material is not, having a front end spaced from the front end of the contact pin. Claims 8, 17 and 26 depend from claims 4, 13 and 17, respectively, and further define the relationship between the base material and the second layer. The recited limitations are not disclosed or suggested by the prior art, including Majumdar.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Majumdar, for the reasons explained above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

With regard to dependent claims 2-27, Applicants submit that these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1 which is allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore claims 2-27 are allowable. In addition, these claims recite further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited Reference

Since the remaining reference cited by the Examiner, Lewis et al., has not been utilized to reject the claims, but has merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chris McDonald, Registration No. 41,533, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

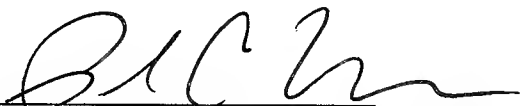
Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: March 26, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By


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